

INSTITUTIONS AND ASSOCIATIONS WORKING FOR PROMOTION OF CHILDREN'S LITERATURE: SPECIAL MENTION TO ORIYA

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With a view to promoting children's literature in various languages of India, a number of institutions and associations have been set up either through Government or private initiative. At the national level, the Children's Book Trust and the National Book Trust have been publishing children's books on a commercial basis. The Association of Writers and Illustrators for Children (AWIC) has been formed through the patronage of the late Mr. K. Shankar Pillai. It is a voluntary organization and has been functioning as a professional body. It has set a national model for promotion of children's literature through multifarious activities like publication of a quarterly journal, the *Writer & Illustrator*, Children's Illustrated Dictionary in Hindi, and compilation of stories and poems for children written by its members. It organizes seminars and workshops on various aspects of children's literature, holds competitions among writers and artists, participates in international conferences and seminars on children's literature and so on. In fact, the AWIC has brought about adequate awareness and has been providing necessary guidance in the field of children's literature at the national level.

All-India Juvenile Literary Association, Calcutta, has been working for some years. Its activities are mainly confined to occasional meetings and seminars, particularly annual conferences. Besides, there are institutions like Bharatiya Bal Kalyan Sansthan (Indian Children Welfare Organiza-

tion) in Kanpur and Indian Council of Child Education, Delhi which have been functioning for children's well-being in general and for children's literature in particular as one of their activities.

Many organizations and associations have been set up in different parts of the country for promotion of children's literature in the regional languages. In Kerala, the State Institute of Children's Literature has been set up by the State Government, the first of its kind in India. The aims and objectives of this institution are multi-dimensional—preparation, production, publication of model books for children. The State Institute of Children's Literature in Karnataka and the Balala Academy of Hyderabad in Andhra Pradesh are some of such State organizations. In Orissa, the Children's Literature Committee was set up in 1961 as part of the Press, Preparation and Publication Committee, for implementing the scheme of Nationalised Text Books in Orissa. Subsequently, it took up the programmes like Children's Literature Competition, organization of seminars and conferences of writers, teachers, though not in a systematic and regular manner.

During 1979, the International Year of the Child, the Research Institute of Oriya Children's Literature (RIOCL) was set up with the initiative of Dr. M. Mohanty and Dr. J. Mohanty. The objectives of the Institute are to encourage research and criticism, to improve the standard of children's literature. The Institute organizes seminars, workshops,

conferences and book exhibitions and also prepares radio and TV programmes. It has also done some pioneering work in organizing workshops at Bhadrak, Talcher, Baripada, Koraput and Berhampur and Barbil for writers and editors of journals of children's literature. In these workshops, attempts were made to give theoretical knowledge as well as practical skills in writing suitable scripts for children. The Institute has also taken up some research projects and has been working as a documentation centre for providing materials to the researchers and writers of children literature. It has brought out two books with the title *Jhumuka*, first part being stories and second part poems for children. It has also brought out a bulletin called *Shishubharta* on different occasions. Now some branches of the Institute have been opened at various places in the State.

The Orissa Children's Literature Akademi (Shishu Sahitya Akademi) was established in 1982 through initiative and efforts of Dr. N. P. Das and Dr. J. Mohanty. The objectives of the Akademi are to organize seminars, conferences and workshops in the Oriya children's literature, to provide publications in the field and to conduct research studies suitable for the development of children's literature. There are two categories of members: (1) individual and (2) institutional and there is an Executive Committee to implement the programmes passed at the annual conference. It has organized some seminars and conferences at Cuttack and Bhubaneswar for discussing the ways and means for improvement of children's literature. Eminent writers, illustrators, publishers, parents and teachers were involved on these occasions and they actively participated in the deliberations. It has taken steps to provide a bibliography of children's journals, collection of poems and stories suitable for different age-groups. It has also

proposed to publish a bibliography of children's books and a Who's Who, of writers, artists and publishers of children. Dr. Mohanty and Dr. D. Brahma, office-bearers of the Akademi have taken up some studies like "An Appraisal of Children's Journals in Orissa" and "The Reading Interests of Children in Orissa." Dr. Brahma has also got Ph.D. degree for his research study of the Educational Implications of Children's literature.

With a view to promoting children's literature particularly in the western Orissa, an organisation called "Ama Shishu Sahitya Parishad" was set up by Shri Raghunath Rout in 1982. Subsequently, it was renamed as Orissa Shishu Sahitya Parishad. It has already implemented some programmes for attracting children to literature and art, organising children's fairs, book exhibitions, felicitating writers, publishing books and journals etc. It has already brought out some publications like *Amagita Ammakatha*, *Nanabaya Gitamala* and *Lekakathamala* to the press.

The "Prajatantra Samiti" was started in 1947 by Dr. H. K. Mahatab, a distinguished litterateur. The Samiti has been doing laudable work in the field of Oriya literature in general and Oriya children's literature in particular. Under the auspices of this organization, a page is devoted to 'Minabazar' a forum of children's literature in the *Prajatantra* daily, which has been very popular. Subsequently, a monthly journal entitled 'Minabazar' is being published by this Samiti and at their annual functions prizes and felicitations are awarded to the writers of monthly and weekly Minabazar. A network of Minabazar has been working in this field throughout the State.

The "Gokarnika Sahitya Samaj" was set up in 1972, has been publishing a literary journal, *Gokarnika* and it holds seminars, conference and meetings for discussion of various literary issues. The programme of this Samaj worth mentioning in this con-

text is the celebration of birth anniversary of Pt. Upendra Tripathy, a distinguished writer of children's literature. On these occasions, it has started giving a prize of Rs. 1,000/- to an author every year for his outstanding contribution to the growth of children's literature.

The "Milani Sahitya Sansad", established in 1962 at Keonjhar has been implementing various literary programmes. It occasionally holds meetings on children's literature and awards prizes and felicitations to the writers of children's literature.

The "Barta Pratistan" in Balasore has been doing a great deal of work in the field of literature. It has been bringing out a literary journal *Barta Urmī* and celebrated its annual conferences giving special importance to the Oriya children's literature. On these occasions, some writers were also felicitated by this organization.

"Dhenkanal Sahitya Parishad" organizes conferences and discusses problems of children's literature. It also organizes exhibition of art and literature for encouraging writers and artists. The "Dharmapada Sishukishore Samiti" has been set up by Sri Soumendra Jena in 1983 at Bhubaneswar. It has taken publication of some compilations like *Ama Sahitya* and children's literature.

The "Oriya Gabesana Parishad" (the Institute of Oriya Studies), Cuttack, has

been established by Dr. Krishna Charan Behera in 1980. It has been working for the promotion of research studies in Oriya literature in a multi-disciplinary method, involving experts and educationists, litterateurs and researchers from various faculties. It has been bringing out a half-yearly literary research journal *Eshana* and has organised seminars and conference for discussing the research projects and problems in Oriya literature in general and in children's literature in particular.

At present, various organizations have been working for the development of children's literature in their own way. But there is no coordination among them, as a result of which, the programmes are not getting momentum. Besides, real workers committed to the cause of children's literature are rare and most of them are engaged in other activities either for earning their livelihood or for satisfying other ulterior motives. The future of children's literature depends on the mutual cooperation and active interest of writers and publishers, artists and parents. It can flourish only through multi-media approaches and multi-disciplinary endeavours. The programmes like publications, research, seminars and discussions should be inter-related and intertwined so that development of children's literature be broad-based, streamlined and could take off for the 21st century.

An organization brings people together to work towards common purposes.